

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.(original) A water-in-oil emulsion preparation for external use on the skin, characterized in that the oil phase comprises a mixture of an ester compound obtained by esterifying the following ingredients (A), (B) and (C); an ester oil; a surfactant; and an oil other than ester oil and that the aqueous phase comprises an aqueous solution of a water-soluble inorganic salt:

- (A) a polyhydric alcohol,
- (B) a fatty acid and/or hydroxy fatty acid each having 8 to 30 carbon atoms and
- (C) a dibasic carboxylic acid having 12 to 30 carbon atoms.

2.(original) The preparation according to claim 1 wherein the mixing ratio in the esterification is such that the ratio of ingredient (A) : ingredient (B) : ingredient (C) is 1.0 mole : 1.0 to 2.5 moles : 0.25 to 1.0 mole.

3.(currently amended) The preparation according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the compounding amounts of the respective ingredients in the oil phase are such that, based on the total mass of the ester compound, the ester oil, the surfactant and the oil other than ester oil, the compounding amount of the ester compound is 0.1 to 30 % by mass, that of the ester oil is 1 to 99 % by mass, that of the surfactant is 0.01 to 40 % by mass and that

of the oil other than ester oil is 0.01 to 98 % by mass; and the compounding amount of the water-soluble inorganic salt in the aqueous phase is 0.01 to 10 % by mass, based on the total mass of the water-soluble inorganic salt and water.

4.(currently amended) The preparation according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~
claim 1 wherein the use ratio of the ester compound to the ester oil in the oil phase is 1:99 to 95:5.

5.(currently amended) The preparation according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~
claim 1 wherein the ratio by mass of the oil phase to the aqueous phase is 10:90 to 90:10.

6.(currently amended) The preparation according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~
claim 1 wherein ingredient (A) is glycerol, ingredient (B) is behenic acid, and ingredient (C) is eicosanedioic acid.

7.(currently amended) The preparation according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~
claim 1 wherein at least one of physical properties, etc.-improving agents generally used in preparations for external use on the skin is compounded.